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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR MARCH 22-23 VISIT OF CODEL WARNER
TO TURKEY

REF: STATE 36986

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Your March 22-23 visit comes at a time when Turkey is attempting to balance its commitments to the West against its desire to maintain harmonious relations with its neighbors and to play a constructive role with other Muslim countries. Turkey remains a significant contributor to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, will host a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercise in May and is actively engaging the new Iraqi government and playing a more constructive role there. The cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base and the Habur Gate border crossing with Iraq continue to provide a vital link for Coalition troops. Turkey is engaged in promoting a broad national unity government in Iraq and is supportive on Iran nuclear issues. Our relations have improved since a low point in 2004 - early 2005, but problems remain. The reception of Hamas was a clumsy mistake; our historically strong defense industry relationship is deteriorating; and Turkey is entering a period of pre-electoral turmoil. Your visit provides an opportunity to review and clear the air on some of these problems. It also is an opportunity to review Turkey's contributions on Iraq, Afghanistan and other issues impacting global security. END SUMMARY.

ENGAGEMENT, NOT ISOLATION

12. (SBU) The GOT insists that issues with Syria, Iran and Hamas can only successfully be resolved through engagement. Given Turkey's geographic location, overwhelmingly Muslim population and western-style democracy, the government believes it is well-placed to send the right messages on behalf of the international community. Additionally, Turkey's attempts to grow its trade relationships and its cooperation with neighboring countries against the PKK are also factors in the government's position. The GOT has reportedly pressed Syria to cooperate with the UN investigation into the Hariri assassination and to prevent the transit of foreign fighters into Iraq; urged Iran to comply with IAEA standards; and emphasized to Hamas the need to recognize Israel, renounce terrorism and commit to continue the peace process.

13. (SBU) Official government statements on Iran's nuclear program have been noticeably stronger since Iran's decision to renew uranium enrichment but the same cannot be said for statements on Syria or Hamas, which tend to put the best face on the issue. While it does not appear that Turkey's

intervention has yet had a positive impact, the government insists that isolating these groups -- including financially -- would not achieve the desired results. You may wish to emphasize the importance of public statements by the government that reflect the strong messages it is reportedly sending in private.

INCREASING COOPERATION WITH IRAQ

¶4. (SBU) The GOT increasingly engages directly with Iraqi authorities on issues of mutual interest rather than relying on the US as a conduit. In addition to its Embassy in Baghdad, it will re-establish a consulate in Mosul this year. Turkey's Special Envoy to Iraq, Amb. Oguz Celikkol visited Baghdad Feb. 23-25 and met with a wide array of Iraqi political figures, including Kurdish leaders with whom Turkey has had tense relations. Subsequently, Iraqi PM Jafari visited Ankara and had useful discussions on economic cooperation, although the visit prompted critical comments from Iraqi President Talabani. Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs has said it plans to send officials to Iraq to meet with Shia and Sunni clerics to promote reconciliation and has pledged to assist in the reconstruction of the Golden Dome in Samarra. Many Turks believe Iraq is headed towards civil war given the increased sectarian violence following the Samarra bombing. You may be asked about US thinking on Iraq and what more we would expect from Turkey.

¶5. (SBU) Significant logistical support for the coalition effort in Iraq is provided by Turkey. The multi-directional cargo hub at Incirlik Air Base has facilitated the movement of over 129 million pounds of equipment for coalition troops since its initiation in May 2005. Six C-17s flying from Incirlik deliver the same quantity of supplies it previously

took 9-10 planes to deliver from Germany. The cargo hub has also facilitated the return of a small number of coalition troops on an emergency basis. The Incirlik air refueling hub has conducted 2800 sorties delivering 192 million pounds of fuel in support of OIF and OEF since 2003. Twenty-five percent of sustainment fuel for Coalition forces enters Iraq through the Habur Gate border crossing from Turkey. Two-thirds of humanitarian fuel for the Iraqi people also flows through this gate, creating periodic bottlenecks. The current crossing is being upgraded but sporadic discussions with Iraq on opening additional border crossings have not made significant progress. With close to \$3B in trade with Iraq during 2005, it is in Turkey's interest to ease congestion at the border. Despite a recent agreement between the two governments, the current stoppage of SOMO (the Iraqi state oil company) humanitarian fuel shipments continues pending negotiation of new contracts with suppliers and receiving agreed installment payment on SOMO arrears.

¶6. (U) The government has used its good offices to assist the democratization process by hosting Iraqi constitution drafters in the lead-up to the drafting process; Talafar tribal leaders to discuss their cooperation against the insurgency there; and a dialogue between hard-line Sunni leaders and US Ambassador to Iraq Khalilzad. Turkey has provided extensive training to Iraqi diplomats and political parties and has spearheaded the "neighbors meetings" process to help Iraqi government leaders engage their regional counterparts. Turkey has provided training to over 300 Iraqi diplomats and political party members at its NATO Center of Excellence in Ankara and has offered to conduct training there under NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) auspices. Turkey has 4 personnel serving in the NTM-I Headquarters in Iraq. You may wish to welcome Turkey's increasing support for Iraq's democratization process and note US appreciation for the logistical support provided to the US and coalition troops.

BUT THE PKK PRESENCE IN IRAQ RANKLES

¶7. (SBU) The PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) terrorist organization presence in northern Iraq remains a major

preoccupation for the GOT. Attacks attributed to the PKK continue against Turkish soldiers and Jandarma in Turkey's southeast in what the GOT presumes are cross-border operations emanating from Iraq. Istanbul and the far eastern city of Van witnessed major terrorist attacks in Feb.- Mar. While recognizing Iraqi and USG limitations to assist Turkey to combat the PKK at this time, the government finds this difficult to explain to a Turkish public fed on a steady diet of news reports about the funerals of Turkish police and military. Ultimately it holds the US accountable. We are working with Turkey and European allies to staunch the flow of funds and logistical support that comes from PKK-connected criminal activities in Europe. The media is predicting an escalation of PKK attacks in Turkish cities beginning on the March 21 annual celebration of Newruz (Kurdish New Year).

SUPPORTING NATO IN AFGHANISTAN

18. (U) Turkey has contributed significantly to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan, successfully commanding ISAF II in 2003 and ISAF VII in 2005. It is currently planning for a joint command of Multinational Brigade Central in Kabul with France and Italy beginning in summer 2006 and will simultaneously open a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in neighboring Wardak Province. Following PM Erdogan's spring 2005 visit to Afghanistan the government increased its bilateral aid to \$100M, including for the reconstruction of schools, and is evaluating the provision of counter-narcotics training. You may wish to recognize Turkey's high level of assistance to this key front in the Global War on Terrorism.

DEFENSE INDUSTRY COOPERATION A DISAPPOINTMENT

19. (SBU) Historically the strongest area of the relationship, bilateral defense industry cooperation is deteriorating. Boeing was the last firm to win a direct sale when Turkey awarded it a contract for an Airborne Early Warning and

Control (AEW&C) system in 2002. Protracted and contentious negotiations on that contract were not completed until fall 2005 and the first plane landed in Turkey on Mar. 14, 2006. Boeing and Bell Textron decided not to participate in an attack helicopter tender due to onerous terms and conditions that placed extensive liability on the contractor and required upfront contractor guarantees of technology transfer rights and licenses. For the same reasons, Sikorsky -- which had considered establishing its International Blackhawk production facility in Turkey if it won a tender for 52 utility helicopters for the Turkish Armed Forces and Forestry Service -- may choose not to bid on that tender. Raytheon may also opt against participation in a tender for a propeller airplane trainer. In the last five years, three US firms -- General Dynamics, Bell Textron and General Atomics Aviation -- have closed their offices in Turkey. You could express US disappointment at the difficult conditions for US defense firms in Turkey and remind your interlocutors that both countries benefit from having US firms compete for Turkish tenders.

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